



NEWS



CONTACT: Fran Clader
(916) 843-3310
(916) 843-3337 FAX

Office of Media Relations
601 N. 7th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

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CHP HONORS ITS COMMUNICATIONS OPERATORS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – In the midst of an emergency, a member of the public may have to call 911. It is the calm voice and gentle demeanor at the other end of the phone that can help soothe rattled nerves and calm a stressful situation. The U.S. Congress has designated the second full week of April of each year as *National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week*. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) takes this opportunity to thank communication workers who are on the front line of emergency response.

“The dedicated public safety dispatchers you speak with at our communications centers throughout the state are highly trained professionals. In an emergency, they may be the first person within our agency that you may come in contact with,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “We are proud of the vital and often life-saving services they provide on a daily basis.”

CHP dispatchers often have challenging and stressful jobs since they take the majority of California’s wireless 911 emergency and non-emergency calls. Dispatchers ensure the appropriate assistance is provided, whether it is sending an officer to respond to a call, or contacting fire, ambulance, or other emergency services. In addition, they are in constant radio communication with the patrol officers, often assisting them by looking up vehicle identification, license plate and driver license numbers, or by running checks for wanted subjects.

The CHP has 25 communications/dispatch centers statewide that employ nearly 900 public safety dispatchers. Last year, these individuals were responsible for handling approximately 9.3 million calls for service (911 and other calls). Calling 911 during a stressful incident can be intimidating. The following tips are designed to help callers through an emergency:

- No matter what happens – stay calm.
- Be prepared to provide your name, phone number, address or location, and a detailed description of the incident being reported.
- Let the dispatcher guide the conversation.
- Wait for the dispatcher to ask questions, then answer clearly and calmly.
- Listen carefully and follow all directions provided by the dispatcher.

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- Be prepared to provide a physical description if an emergency involves a criminal suspect.
- Cellular telephones may not tell the call-taker where you are. Use a landline to report an emergency whenever possible.
- Remember, 911 is for life-threatening emergencies. Misuse of the emergency 911 system will result in a delay for callers with real emergencies and is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

“We commend the employees who provide radio, telephone, and computer services to the public and CHP officers in the field, and we appreciate their continued dedication and professionalism,” added Commissioner Farrow.

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